

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1551
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
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E.O.11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, IS
SUBJ: DAYAN ADDRESSES WORLD ZIONIST CONGRESS

1. SUMMARY: FOREIGN MINISTER DAYAN IN HIS ADDRESS TO THE WORLD ZIONIST CONGRESS FEBRUARY 27 BLAMED THE EGYPTIANS FOR THE CURRENT STALEMATE OF THE PEACE TALKS AND THE RETURN TO INDIRECT NEGOTIATIONS. HE ATTRIBUTED THIS TO SADAT'S FEAR OF NEGOTIATING ALONE. THEREFORE INSTEAD OF NEGOTIATING BILATERAL ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN QUESTIONS, HE NOW INSISTS ON DISCUSSING THE GENERAL QUESTION OF ARAB AND PALESTINIAN INTERESTS. MOREOVER, IN THE HOPE OF INDUCING THE JORDANIANS TO JOIN THE NEGOTIATIONS HE HAS REVERTED TO A MAXIMALIST LINE ON THE TERRITORIAL QUESTIONS. ISRAEL WOULD NOT YIELD IN ADVANCE ON ISSUES VITAL TO ITS
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SECURITY AND INTERESTS. IN CONCLUDING, HOWEVER, DAYAN EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE SPIRIT WHICH HAD BROUGHT SADAT TO JERUSALEM WAS NOT DEAD AND THAT FRUITFUL NEGOTIATIONS COULD BE REVIVED SOON. IN ANSWERING QUESTIONS ON THE GOI SETTLEMENTS POLICY HE DISPLAYED CONSIDERABLE IRRITATION WITH THE QUESTIONERS AND TOLD THEM TO DIRECT THEIR CRITICISM TO SADAT NOT TO ISRAEL. AUDIENCE REACTION WAS RATHER COOL. END SUMMARY

2. ON THE EVENING OF FEBRUARY 27, FOREIGN MINISTER MOSHE DAYAN ADDRESSED THE DELEGATES OF THE WORLD ZIONIST CONGRESS ON THE STATE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH EGYPT AND THEN ANSWERED QUESTIONS POSED BY SEVERAL DELEGATES, MOSTLY FROM ENGLAND AND THE U.S.

3. IN HIS SPEECH DAYAN STRESSED THE THEME THAT ENTIRELY BECAUSE OF THE EGYPTIANS, FURTHER PROGRESS APPEARS STALLED, AND NEGOTIATIONS HAVE REVERTED FROM INITIAL DIRECT TALKS BACK TO INDIRECT TALKS THROUGH THE AMERICANS ACTING AS INTERMEDIARIES. THE EGYPTIANS ARE NOW INSISTING ON DISCUSSING THE FUTURE OF JUDEA AND SAMARIA, THE GAZA STRIP AND THE GOLAN AS WELL AS THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE RATHER THAN PEACE PLANS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND EGYPT. THE TALKS ARE NO LONGER ABOUT CONCRETE PROPOSALS BUT ABOUT VERY GENERALIZED SEMANTIC FORMULATIONS. THIS WAS ENTIRELY BECAUSE EGYPT HAS BACKED AWAY FROM ITS INITIAL DESIRE TO DISCUSS PRACTICAL PEACE PROPOSALS. IN THEIR EARLY CONTACTS THE EGYPTIANS HAD ASKED ISRAEL TO PRESENT ITS PROPOSAL REGARDING EVERY SQUARE METER OF LAND IN SINAI AND ONLY GENERAL FORMULAS REGARDING THE BROADER ISSUES OF ARAB INTERESTS. EGYPT THEN HINTED THAT ISRAEL SHOULD NOT EVEN RAISE THE GOLAN HEIGHTS QUESTION. NOW EGYPT'S ATTITUDE HAS UNDERGONE A CHANGE FOR THE WORSE. THE RESULT IS THAT TODAY THE DISCUSSIONS ARE SOLELY ON THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE WHICH WAS TO HAVE BEEN SUBSIDIARY WHILE ALL NEGOTIATIONS ON BILATERAL QUESTIONS HAVE CEASED.

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4. THE REASON IS TO BE FOUND NOT IN ISRAEL'S SETTLEMENT POLICY NOR IN ITS DEMANDS FOR DEMILITARIZATION OF MUCH OF THE SINAI, BUT IN EGYPT'S SUDDEN RESOLVE NOT TO PURSUE NEGOTIATIONS ALONE. JORDAN WAS TO HAVE BEEN BROUGHT INTO THE NEGOTIATIONS BUT IS REFUSING TO JOIN UNLESS ISRAEL AGREES IN ADVANCE TO WITHDRAW TOTALLY FROM THE WEST BANK, TO APPROVE A PALESTINIAN ARAB STATE, AND TO PERMIT A RETURN OF ARAB REFUGEES EVEN TO THE AREA WITHIN THE PRE-1967 BORDERS. THIS EXTREME EGYPTIAN INTRANSIGENCE WAS DESIGNED TO AVOID ANY ACCUSATION FROM PALESTINIANS OR OTHER ARAB QUARTERS THAT JORDAN WAS ENTERING NEGOTIATIONS WITHOUT A VALID MANDATE. IF IT SECURED ALL THE ARAB DEMANDS IN ADVANCE, AMMAN REASONS, IT WOULD NOT BE FACED WITH ANY SUCH ACCUSATIONS. SINCE ISRAEL IS REJECTING THESE PRECONDITIONS, JORDAN IS STAYING OUT AND SO IS EGYPT.

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5. THIS IS THE SITUATION AT THE PRESENT STAGE WHICH DAYAN HOPED, HOWEVER, WOULD NOT BE THE FINAL ONE. HE STILL HOPED AND BELIEVED THAT THE SPIRIT WHICH HAD BROUGHT SADAT TO JERUSALEM REMAINS VALID, AND WILL ULTIMATELY PREVAIL AND LEAD TO RENEWAL OF JOINT DISCUSSIONS ON PLANS FOR PEACE BETWEEN CAIRO AND JERUSALEM. IF JORDAN OR THE PALESTINIAN ARABS WANT TO JOIN, ISRAEL WOULD WELCOME THIS. HOWEVER, ONE CANNOT DEMAND OF ISRAEL THAT IT COMMIT ITSELF IN ADVANCE TO THINGS TO WHICH IT CAN NEVER AGREE, SUCH AS WITHDRAWAL FROM ALL THE TERRITORIES AND THE RECOGNITION OF A PALESTINIAN STATE.

6. FOLLOWING THE SPEECH, AN AMERICAN, BRITISH AND ISRAELI DELEGATE EACH ASKED DAYAN FOR EXPLANATIONS ON THE GOI HANDLING OF THE SETTLEMENTS ISSUE AND HOW TO PRESENT IT TO HIS CONSTITUENCY.
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THEY ALL POINTED OUT THAT IN CONTRAST TO THE INITIAL, VERY FAVORABLE REACTION TO BEGIN'S PEACE PROPOSALS, PEOPLE WERE NOW BEWILDERED AND UPSET BY WHAT THEY PERCEIVED AS CONTRADICTIONS AND INCONSISTENCIES IN ISRAEL'S POLICIES. THIS ALSO, THEY STATED, HAD A NOTABLE AFFECT ON FUND RAISING CAMPAIGNS. DAYAN REPLIED IN A TONE OF EVIDENT IRRITATION THAT NOT A SINGLE NEW SETTLEMENT

HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED IN THE RAFAH REGION SINCE THE LIKUD GOVERNMENT CAME TO POWER. HE EVEN ASKED THE AUDIENCE TO NAME ONE IF INDEED IT EXISTED. THE QUESTION WAS MET WITH A MIXTURE OF APPLAUSE AND CAT-CALLS.

7. DAYAN THEN CONTINUED TO EXPLAIN THAT ALL SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY IN THE RAFAH AREA HAD BEEN RELATED TO IMPROVING THE INFRASTRUCTURE AND THE WATER SUPPLY OF EXISTING COMMUNITIES AND TO EXPANDING HOUSING AND AGRICULTURAL FACILITIES. THIS HAD TO BE DONE TO REASSURE THE SETTLERS IN THE FACE OF A HIGHLY UNCERTAIN SITUATION. ISRAEL MUST ENSURE THAT SETTLEMENTS CAN REMAIN IN THE SINAI AFTER ITS WITHDRAWAL. THIS PERTAINS BOTH TO THE RAFAH AREA AND TO THE SETTLEMENTS ALONG THE GULF OF EILAT AND DOWN TO SHARM-EL-SHEIKH. HOWEVER, THE ACT OF SETTLING THERE WAS ENTIRELY VOLUNTARY AND IF THE SETTLERS WOULD NOT WANT TO REMAIN THERE UNDER EGYPTIAN SOVEREIGNTY, NOBODY WOULD FORCE THEM TO DO SO, AND THEY COULD COME BACK TO ISRAEL.

8. DAYAN THEN CHALLENGED HIS QUESTIONERS, ASKING WHY THEY DID NOT ADDRESS THEIR CRITICISM TO SADAT WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CURRENT STALEMATE IN NEGOTIATIONS. THE SETTLEMENT ISSUE WAS SIMPLY A PRETEXT, AS HE HAD ALREADY EXPLAINED IN HIS SPEECH. MOREOVER, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF A COUPLE OF PLANNED SETTLEMENTS IN JUDEA AND SAMARIA WHICH HAD ALREADY RECEIVED PRIOR APPROVAL, THE CABINET NOW AGREED TO REFRAIN FOR THE TIME BEING FROM ESTABLISHING ANY NEW ONES. WITH REGARD TO SHILOH, HE EXPLAINED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD ACTED IN GOOD FAITH WHEN IT EXPLAINED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THAT THIS WAS AN ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE. IT COULD NOT BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT SOME GUSH EMUNIM PEOPLE HAD SAID. THEY DO NOT MAKE POLICY. WHEN THE ARCHEOLOGICAL EXPLORATIONS ARE FINISHED THE CAMP WOULD BE REMOVED.

9. IN CONCLUDING, DAYAN BRIEFLY COMMENTED ON HIS STATEMENT REGARDING ISRAELI MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO ETHIOPIA, EXPLAINING AGAIN THAT THE DETAILS OF THIS ASSISTANCE HAD BEEN ALREADY WIDELY PUBLICIZED IN THE WORLD PRESS AND THAT THERE WAS NOTHING TO HIDE. MOREOVER, THE PRIME MINISTER HAD ACCEPTED HIS EXPLANATION AND THERE WAS NOTHING FURTHER TO SAY. THE REACTION OF THE AUDIENCE, WHICH INCLUDED A HIGH PERCENT OF FOREIGN DELEGATES, WAS NOTABLY RESTRAINED.

LEWIS

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